

IDAHO TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

DISTRICT 6

6 BITS

MAIN OFFICE ENTRANCE

Sign on District 6 office south of Rigby

NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES AND FRIENDS OF ITD DISTRICT 6 – FEBRUARY 2015 (VOLUME 15, ISSUE 1)



Photo courtesy of Drew Meppen

Crews pour the deck of the new Del Rio Bridge on the U.S. 20 business loop east of St. Anthony. In the background is the old bridge.

Managing construction project lives up to billing

Managing a construction project lived up to its billing, says Drew Meppen. The task was challenging but rewarding.



Meppen, an engineer in training in Residency A of District 6, oversaw replacement of the Del Rio Bridge on the U.S. 20 business loop east of St. Anthony.

Residency A Engineer, Wade Allen, says, “Drew handled the ups and downs of the project with a good balance of confidence and humility.”

“It was a great learning experience,” Drew says. “It beat anything in school.”

Drew says Wade had him write letters to stakeholders just as would a resident engineer. He says colleagues Mike Poole and Rich Asbury taught him the ins and outs of construction inspection.

In addition to managing the project, Drew designed vertical and horizontal bridge and roadway alignments, drawing on the expertise of Project Development’s Ryan Day and Mike McKee. He also designed a drainage system for the roadside northwest of the bridge.

The Bridge Design Section at ITD Headquarters in Boise designed the bridge structure.

Reorganization update

Moving toward ITD’s vision for 2020, District 6 Engineer Kimbol Allen changed some job assignments, effective Feb. 9. Affected employees were supervisors and staff members in planning, design, construction, materials, traffic, environmental and property management job classifications (see charts on pages 6-7).

District 6 opened the new bridge Oct. 31 – on schedule and within budget. The new bridge is 16 feet wider and 35 feet longer than the old one.

The old steel-truss bridge, constructed in 1931, had far exceeded its 50-year design life.

Rexburg-based D.L. Beck Inc. was the contractor for the \$2.46 million replacement project. Requirements were to remove and dispose of the old bridge and to construct a new one of concrete.

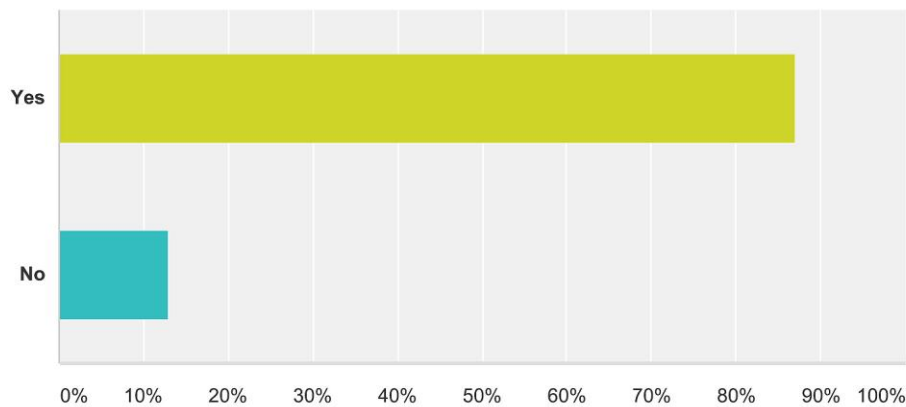
Crews cleverly slid the old bridge onto temporary piers that they installed north of the bridge to support placement of girders for the new bridge.

“Workers installed a track alongside the old bridge on which to shift girders over the river, such that cranes on each side of the river could lift and hoist the girders into place,” Drew says. “The innovation saved time and money.”

(continued on page 4)

Q2 Should District 6 continue the newsletter?

Answered: 62 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	87.10% 54
No	12.90% 8
Total	62

Results of survey on District 6 newsletter *6 Bits*

The bottom line – favorable.

Employees overwhelmingly recommend keeping *6 Bits*.

Its future wasn't necessarily in doubt, but the district wanted feedback – a reality check if you will.

“Luv it!” says one employee.

“Very informative,” says another.

Other quotes:

“Like the publication”

“It’s a good mix.”

“I enjoy reading it.”

“Good job.”

Negatives:

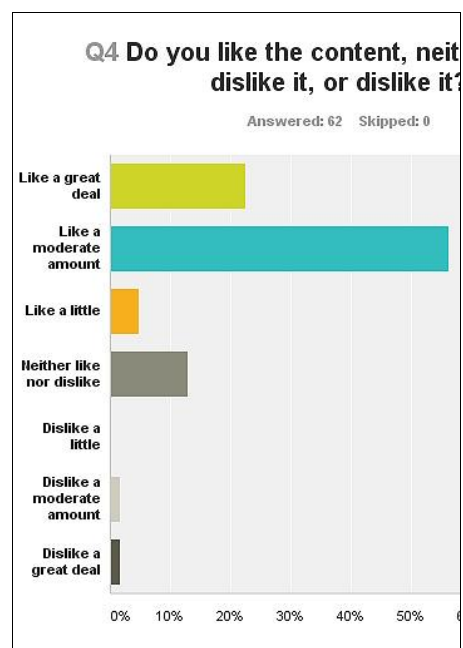
“Dislike [it] a great deal.”

“Pointless.”

Suggestions:

“Highlight individuals who effectively but quietly do their job.”

“I’d like to see more on the new and innovative, as well as on what’s going on in both upper management and the [Legislature],” another person says.



Sixty-two of the district’s 153 employees took the survey – 41 percent.

See summary results for yourself: [\(Newsletter Survey Results\)](#)

The district intends to implement some of the suggestions.

“We received feedback from employees around the district, which was helpful,” says District 6 Engineer Kimbol Allen.

Thanks to everyone who participated.

Suggestions for the newsletter are always welcome, of course, especially when they are stories that *you* write and photographs that *you* take.

Submit ideas, articles and artwork to bruce.king@itd.idaho.gov.

For your information, the district has published *6 Bits* for 15 years.

The newsletter’s name hails from Records Inspector Myron Williams, who won the naming contest in 2000. ■



Don, Pam, Dallas and Dave Grende at the Idaho Lottery Commission in Boise Jan. 2. That's when they happily became believers.

Dreams come true; dad buys winning lotto ticket

Who hasn't thought about it?

Winning the lottery – or otherwise getting rich.

The dream came true for District 6 storekeeper Dave Grende (GRENDDee).

His dad bought a Powerball ticket in Teton in December.

Results of the Dec. 29 drawing matched the ticket's numbers – \$2 million.

The family of four had a standing agreement: If one wins, they all win. So Don Grende divided the jackpot with his wife, Pam, and their two sons, Dave and Dallas.

"I feel fortunate that my folks are so generous," Dave says.

Yup – \$500,000 each.

Tidy sum.

A pleasant surprise, Dave quips.

The first reaction – disbelief (all)
The second reaction – disbelief (all).
The third reaction – more disbelief (all).

"It wasn't until we arrived at the office of the Idaho Lottery Commission in Boise Jan. 2 that the win became believable," Dave says. "It was especially nice when the monitor of the ticket reader displayed '\$2 million.'"

They had their checks when they left the office, minus state and federal taxes. Dave declined to disclose the tax liability, but it was significant.

The family drove to Jackpot, Nev., to celebrate.

Could they have declined to identify themselves? Not in Idaho.

"In some states, you can sign a nondisclosure form and remain anonymous," Dave says. "In Idaho, lottery winnings are public record."

Plans? "My brother and I will continue to work," Dave says, "although winning moves our retirement dates a little

closer." Mom and dad were already retired.

"A fool and his money soon part," the saying goes. The Grende family doesn't fit that category. They have retained financial advisors to recommend sound investments.

Family members plan to continue their practice of buying lottery tickets each week.

"We have been buying them for years," Dave says. "It finally paid off."

"Winning puts you in a different mindset," he concludes. "A lot of worries went away." ■



(continued from page 1)

The engineer in training says knowing how to use survey equipment proved valuable.

“We caught vertical and horizontal placement errors, which enabled us to make necessary adjustments,” he says.

The new bridge includes six girders, each 151 feet long and 6 feet tall. It features stamped-concrete veneers and coordinated earth-tone colors.

In preparation for replacing the bridge and to protect the habitat of popular protected birds, crews moved a 600-pound osprey nest atop it to a specially prepared platform 135 yards away. ITD recognized this proactive response, conducted more than a year in advance of construction, by naming District 6 the winner in the “environmental stewardship” category of the agency’s 2014 Excellence in Transportation Awards competition.

Engineering Manager Karen Hiatt says ITD Director Brian Ness visited the Del Rio Bridge project last year and enjoyed the beautiful setting of the project on the Henry’s Fork of the Snake River. In addition, the Idaho Transportation Board saw time-lapse footage of moving the old bridge during its 2014 tour of District 6. Board members were fascinated by the innovations.

Footage of the project is available for viewing at:

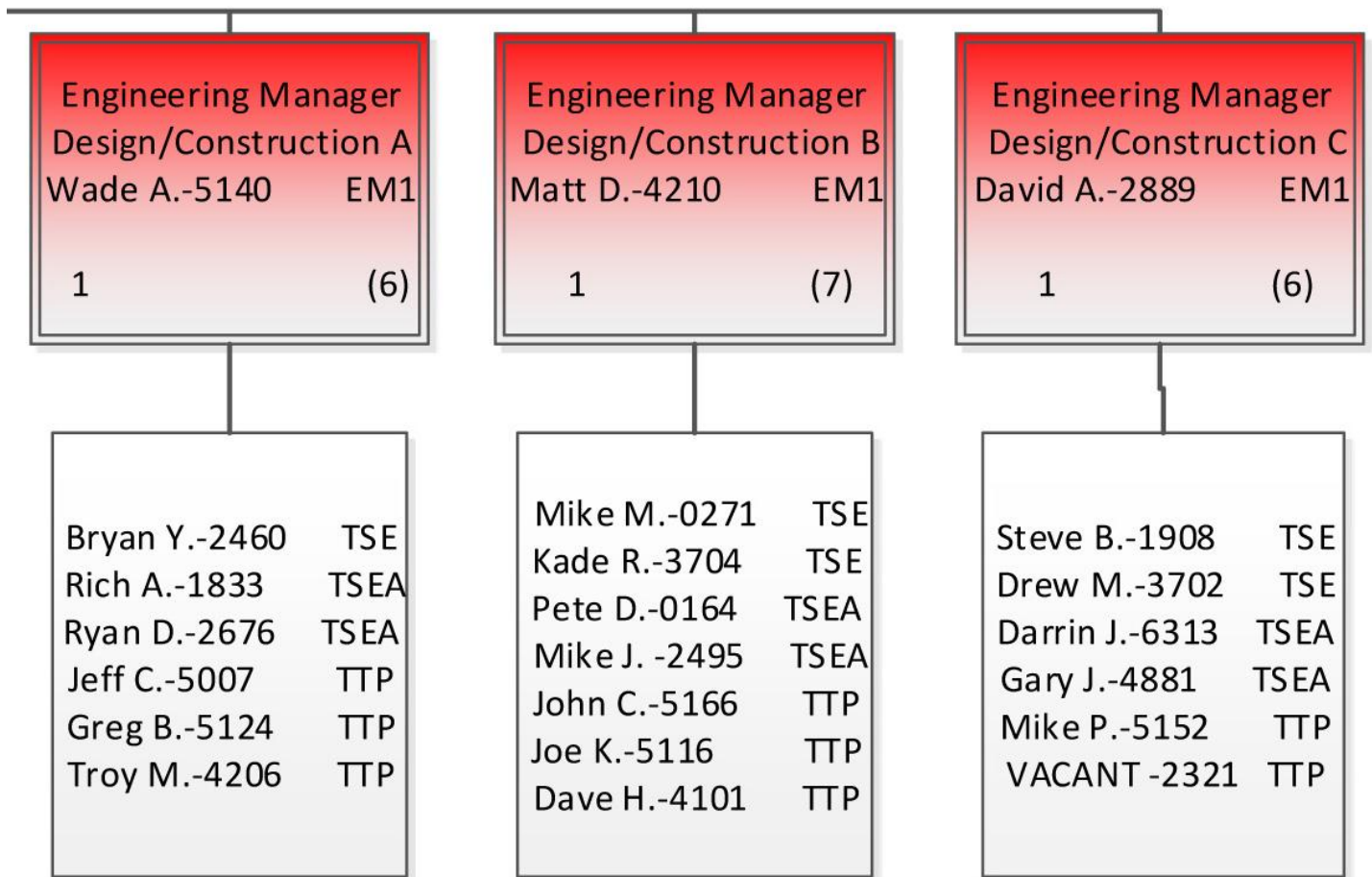
<http://youtu.be/BX2whUAmFyg>.

Drew also arranged a Lidar scan of the old bridge as a lasting visual memoir.

“Seeing how we improved the roadway was satisfying,” Drew says. “Thanks to all who helped.” ■

Allen names three design-construction teams,

(continued from page 1)



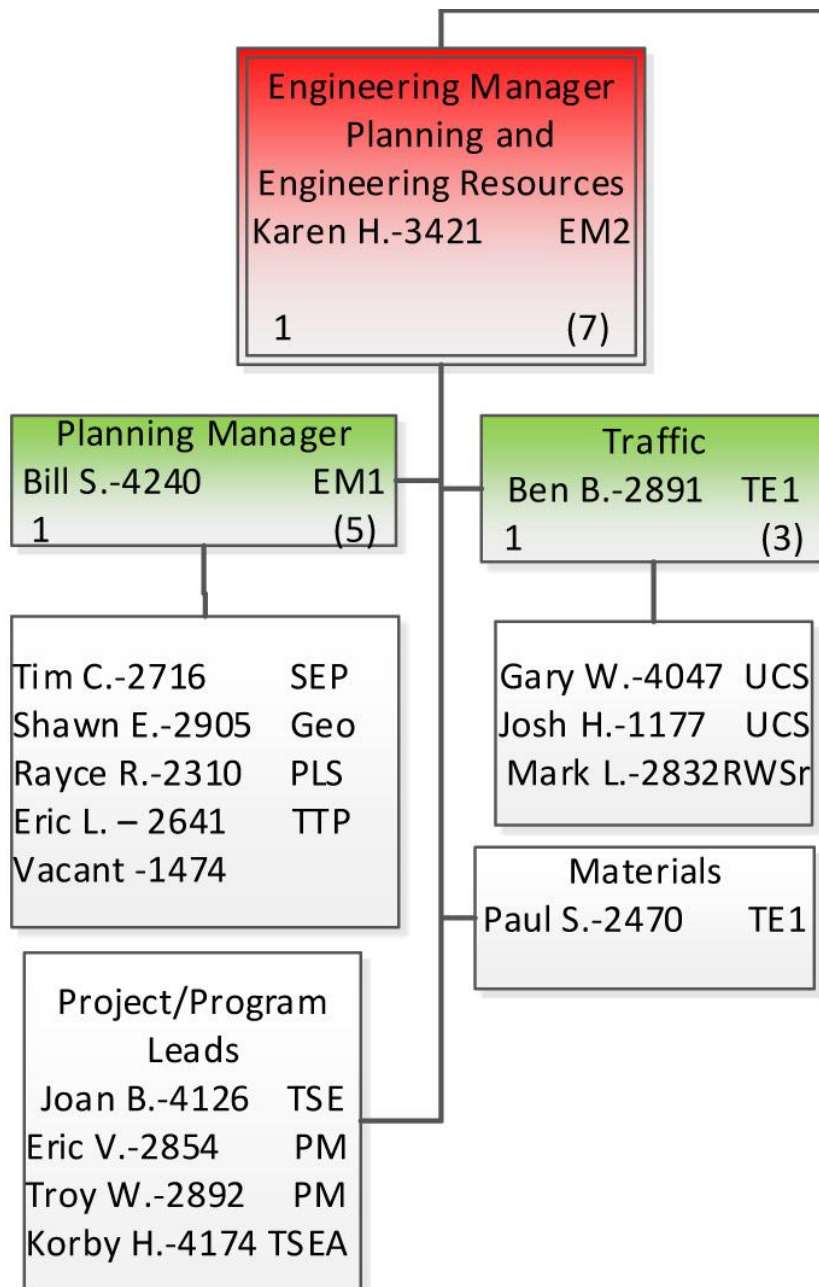
Design/Construction Team

Responsibilities

Development Phase
 Implementation Phase
 Agreements
 Utilities
 Complete Final Design
 PS&E
 Contract Admin

District 6 Engineer Kimbol Allen named Wade Allen, Matt Davison and David Alvarez to manage design-construction teams A, B and C, which will handle project development, implementation and administration for assigned projects.

Hiatt to manage Planning and Resources Team



Kimbol named Engineering Manager Karen Hiatt to manage the new Planning and Resources Team, created to assist with project planning and development.

Planning and Resources Team

Responsibilities

ITIP
Project Charter/PSS
Planning Phase
Evaluation Phase
Environmental/Permits
Public involvement
Up to Design Approval

Programs

Permits
Property Mngt.
Sources
GIS
Lab
Program Mngt.

Members of the Planning and Resources Team will assist with project planning and design, working with design-construction teams.

Comings & Goings

New employees are David Price, transportation technician apprentice in Dubois, and Bonnie Darnell, human resource associate in Administration.



David Price

Promotions: Jeremy Hunting to computer-aided drafting (CAD) and ProjectWise coordinator in District 3, Mike Jones to transportation staff engineer assistant (TSEA) in Residency B, District 6, and Josh Sprague to trainer in Administration, District 6.

Retirees: Pete Demitropoulos, TSEA, Residency B, 38 years.

"I, Peter A. Demitropoulos, have enjoyed the work, people and learning experiences at ITD. Having met the 'rule of 90,' I have decided to retire. My last day will be March 16.

"Thanks to everyone with whom I've worked and from whom I've learned. I've thoroughly enjoyed working with all of you, who are truly my friends. I will miss you. – Pete."

In Memoriam

Donna Coleman, 71, died Feb. 5. She was the wife of Arlo Coleman, a former maintenance worker at District 6. Services were Feb. 10. The district expresses condolences to family and friends of the bereaved.

New arrivals: Twins Hunter Hugh and Addyson Elaine Merritt, born to Joe and Kelsie Merritt Feb. 5, on Joe's birthday. Joe is a transportation technician in Salmon. Mother and babies are fine. Great birthday, eh?■



Hunter (left) and Addyson

Opinion

Driver behavior determines safety

A recent letter in the *Wall Street Journal* points out that traffic safety is mostly a matter of driver behavior. That's no surprise to anyone, but it is a good reminder.



Bruce King
Public
Information
Specialist

"...vehicle factors, while important, aren't as important as road factors, which aren't nearly as important as driver behavior..." ("Traffic Deaths and Driver Behavior," Leonard Evans, Bloomfield Hills, Mich., *Opinion, Wall Street Journal*, Tuesday, December 30, 2014, p. A10)

Customer feedback

Letter to the editor: Service Agencies go above, beyond

"I would like to start this letter by thanking the ...nice lady at the Idaho Transportation Department....

"A few days ago a dead deer was found in our yard. My husband is 86 years old and disabled. I have a broken arm, and our son cannot lift anything. I was told to call Fish and Game, as they would certainly want to know how and why the deer was dead. I called them and explained our circumstance to the lady, and she said, 'No, we do not do that. This is your responsibility.'

"So a friend told me to call the Idaho Transportation Department. I did, and the lady there was wonderful. As I explained our situation to her, she said, 'I will call the city for you.' Within 15 minutes, we got a call from the city's Street Department. He was so nice, and I told him the deer would be next to the street. They came within 30 minutes to remove the carcass.

"...there still are a lot of nice people out there, as we discovered with...the transportation department."

– Letter by Bonnie and Bill Willoughby, *Coeur d'Alene Press*, 1-23-2015.■

Yup. Each of us must drive defensively to eliminate crashes. That means avoiding aggressive, distracted and drowsy driving.

Here's the lead of the letter:

"The headline 'Safety Gains in Newer Cars Cut Traffic Fatalities' (page one, Dec. 20 issue of the *Wall Street Journal*) may be literally correct, but it conveys a grand falsehood. Eighty years of scientific research show that policies addressing how people drive have an effect on safety that overwhelms technological details.

"U.S. traffic deaths have declined since 1972 by 41%. This might seem impressive, [but] deaths in the Netherlands declined by 81% in the same period. If U.S. deaths had declined by 81%, we would be killing 22,000 fewer Americans on our roads each year. Vehicle improvements in all motorized countries have been similar....

"The U.S. driving population is fed a diet of misinformation that vehicle factors are crucial. Examples are the massive attention given to defects in Toyota and GM vehicles. It is alleged that these defects played some role in fewer than 100 deaths in a decade.

"In the same decade more than 450,000 people, including more than 8,000 children under 8, were killed in U.S. traffic. Overwhelmingly, their deaths had nothing to do with technology, defective or otherwise. The 450,000 deaths should be the focus of public concern, not the few that generate litigation earnings."

Given that we are now well into a new year, let each of us attend to our driving. Personal and public safety depends on it.■

